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## THE ART ASSOCIATION EXHIBITION.

DURING the latter half of January the American Art Association put on exhibition a collection of one hundred and ten pictures by American artists, none of which had been shown to the public before. It was a worthy successor to the Clarke Collection, and must have made a very agreeable impression on the public, though owing, doubtless, to the bad state of the money market few pictures were sold. The most striking landscape was Arthur Quartley's "Summer Morning, Star Island, Isle of Shoals." A very fine picture by whomever painted, and far in advance of anything done before by the artist. It was a noble work every way—in composition, in color, and in painting. On the left, a giant promontory of syenite in full sunlight thrusts out from the shore, seamed with a vast rift out of which a million tempests have dragged down the trap-rock, block by block, and heaped it up at the base. Beyond and in front is the deep blue water on

out, but the effect of the whole is most pleasing and refined." The picture, however, deserves much fuller recognition than this. It is safe to say that in the whole collection at Munich there were few that made more impression by their sincerity, harmony, and general skill in treatment than this picture, albeit the fault of youth and inexperience are evident enough in it. But the story is in the first place so well told that there is really no need whatever of a printed title, and this is in itself a great merit. Then, all the types are true and clearly made out: the lawyer, a first-rate study without a trace of Munich in him, though I fear his clerk cannot claim to be home-bred, and I am glad of it, for I don't like his sidelong eye, nor the expression of his mercenary back, which tells a plain tale of a change of heart now that the tall handsome girl standing by her widowed sister, hears that she is no longer rich. The mother is the only unsatisfactory figure; she is too young and untried, but it is not easy to look at her for the sturdy handsome child at

which the general public could hardly have been prepared for. Here are two spirited works, by which the artist has pledged himself to the public, and which it is plain may be the starting points of still stronger work in the future. Everybody is delighted with the flowers, rich in form and color, and so lightly crowded in their not very interesting jar—metal or clay, which is it? The man's head, notwithstanding, looks down with a slightly supercilious smile, as if to say, "Whenever you are ready to give me your attention, I am ready to receive it." And such a vigorous, lively head would be sure to receive attention were there a room full of competitors; but as it is there is no rival here but Mr. Stiefel's "Head."

There are only a few of the pictures in a room containing many other good works, of which perhaps the most striking are Millet's "Proserpina Gathering Flowers," Twachtman's "Study of New York Wharves," Bolton-Jones's "Late October," Dewey's "A November Day," Bliss-Baker's two landscapes,



"A FLAW IN THE TITLE," BY I. H. CALIGA.

DRAWN BY THE ARTIST FROM HIS PAINTING IN THE AMERICAN ART EXHIBITION.

which a fishing-fleet with its gull-like sails bears out to sea at the right, while a score of small boats rock on the dancing waves near the shore. On the water all is life and motion—seldom was water better painted—but the rocky cliff and the tranquil sky with its masses of fleecy cloud veiling the bright blue give the scene majesty and repose. Next in interest to Mr. Quartley's picture was the work of a new artist, "Caliga," the studio name of J. Harry Stiefel. Mr. Stiefel sent four pictures, two of which had been in the Exposition at Munich last summer, where they were much admired. Franz Pecht, in his excellent review of the American pictures in the Munich Exposition, published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, says of this artist: "I now come to the genre pictures, which represent scenes from distinctively American life, and are therefore highly interesting. Among these the first place belongs to Caliga's 'A Flaw in the Will.' A thoroughly genuine Yankee lawyer explains 'the flaw' to the handsome young widow who consults him. Not only are the characters successfully worked

her knee, with his brave look into the lawyer's kindly face, although he cannot comprehend all the trouble that is conveyed by this gentle voice, which to his mother and sister is the voice of fate. On the whole, I do not remember a more interesting genre picture than this—one with a deeper meaning, of more general interest, or richer in study of character. It is, certainly, a very promising "first appearance." The same model for which the girl in this picture has stood appears again in a life-size three-quarter portrait, showing the young lady in a walking dress with a folded sunshade, and fastening her glove, the whole much to be praised for its simplicity, elegance, and truth of action. It would have been sufficient in itself to establish the artist's reputation as a distinct and important individuality.

No one will dispute, I think, C. Y. Turner's claim to be considered a very important figure in this collection, for his "Chrysanthemums," and "Head of a Man" show a power and a skill that those who know him best may have suspected or even believed, but

and the two by F. Appleton Brown—both of which are good; but "Early Autumn" shows in its light touch the more freedom, and escape from Hunt's tutelage or from that of Hunt's tutors. Mr. Bristol's picture, "St. Joseph's River, Indiana," shows this artist at his best, and Wadsworth Thompson's "Market Place at Biskra" is good in spots, and not bad anywhere. S. J. Guy's "Open your Mouth and Shut your Eyes" has a provoking title, for the only way in which a well-disposed critic can justify himself for obeying the first half of the injunction is by diligently heeding the latter half. Before such drawing and such color, I prefer to shut my eyes and say nothing. George Inness has a landscape in the latter vein, but with real sunlight in it making itself felt through a veil of mist. On the whole, this collection, taken in connection with that of Mr. Clarke, sets one to thinking whether, after all, there may not be some good to be got out of the absurd and narrow-minded legislation that threatens to shut out the works of foreign artists from this country. May it not result in forcing

us to look more closely into the condition of our own art, and may it not impel our artists to make more vigorous efforts to keep the field so ignorantly cleared for them?

C. C.

#### THE BROOKLYN BARTHOLDI LOAN EXHIBITION.

WHETHER or no the Bartholdi statue of Liberty be a desirable thing in itself, it is certain that the struggle in which we are now engaged to pay for its pedestal is turning out a good thing for the general public. It has already given us the New York Loan Exhibition, which offered to thousands of people the sight of beautiful things else hidden in the cabinets and jewel-boxes of the rich; and for those who had eyes to see, it spread a feast of pictures such as, in Paris or London, would have rejoiced the world of artists and amateurs, albeit there were many who found the art in these pictures too artistic by half for their cordial enjoyment. But if, for what may be called practical purposes, it may be conceded that the New York Exhibition was made up too exclusively with a view to pleasing artists, no such objection could have been urged against the Brooklyn Exhibition. Here was spread a bountiful table of Rousseaus, Diazes, Corots, Milletts, Duprés, Fromentins, and these pièces de résistance were garnished with Bouguereau syllabus, Merle ices, bonbons of Béraud, Firmin-Gérard, and Boldini, with, for the waiters, a good supply of Defregger, Mosler, Knaus, Kaemmerer, and Max. But, indeed, these names by no means exhaust the variety of the collection, which included, beside, a score of well-known names, several good works by American artists, so that it was hard, if any reasonable taste went away altogether unsatisfied.

It is inevitable that in any collection the pictures most sought after by the general public should be those which, for lack of a better term, we call figure-subjects. And the Brooklyn Exhibition owed a good deal of its success to the judicious mingling of figure-subjects and landscapes, with, in spite of the exceptionally large number of French landscapes, a decided leaning to the side of figure-subjects. There was always a group of delighted women about Firmin-Gérard's "The Godmother's Garden," and as a first-rate specimen of the skill of a very skilful artist the picture deserved all the admiration it excited. But to show how unthinkingly people of intelligence will sometimes look at a picture, I may record a conversation between two ladies, overheard by me while standing before this particular work.

First speaker: "Oh, what a beautiful picture! How well it is painted! Just look at those dresses! Did you ever see materials better done? Those silks! That velvet! And the little girl's coat! Look at the swan's-down, will you!"

Second speaker: "Yes, indeed, it is beautifully painted! But, don't you think the dresses are rather heavy for summer? Silks, and velvets, and swan's-down in the summer, and out of doors!"

First speaker: "Oh, I didn't think of that. Yes, I wonder the artist didn't see what a mistake he was making! It is summer, of course, for there are the flowers!"

Second speaker: "Oh, certainly it is summer. Don't you see the leaves on the trees?"

First speaker: "Yes, you are right. It is beautifully painted, but he might have made the dresses more summery!"

And the fair critics passed on, having, in this unceremonious way, dismissed a picture in which two ladies with a little girl are in the garden of a château on the edge of a park whose trees are nearly stripped of their foliage by the autumn wind, while a shrub in the foreground boasts still a few leaves that flutter about its branches like birds that are hastening to be gone. And the godmother is culling with a generous hand a bouquet of chrysanthemums from a border filled with this flower, the symbol, with the Japanese, of friendship, because it only blooms when summer and prosperity are fled. It is strange how people of sense and intelligence can look at a picture with so plainly told a story as this, and mistake it. But no one can have haunted picture-galleries long without encountering many such incidents.

The large Defregger here gives much pleasure, and, indeed, it would not be easy to find a better example

of the artist. This is a picture far superior to the one bought by the Bavarian Government at the recent Exposition in Munich, and destined to be placed in the new Pinacothek. There is small art and less technical skill in Defregger; but, like our own J. G. Brown, he has learned to play the one-finger waltz with great dexterity and popularity, and the hearty animal side of the German and Tyrolese peasant was never better hit off than it is in such pieces as this. He has a healthy sympathy with these people, and enjoys their company; and without caricaturing them or making them a hair better or worse than they really are, contrives to make us like them, too, and well content while the thunderstorm lasts to take shelter in the dance-hall with them and watch their doings. It is true that after one has seen fifty Defreggers he begins to wonder whether nature could not try her hand at another sort of peasant, even while admitting that these are excellent of their kind.

Henry Mosler is an American artist—so Mrs. Van Rensselaer tells us in those clear, well-written notes of hers that give so solid a value to the catalogue of the exhibition—but it is not written on his picture here. This is a scene from French peasant life. The dried-up, sordid parents of the young couple who are amusing themselves with bovine chat in the corner are engaged in an eager chaffer over the money that shall be put down by either side to clinch the barter of these tough youngsters. Mr. Mosler tells the disagreeable story as well as Defregger could tell it, but I do not see that he holds out the promise of a good



"CRADLE SONG."

FROM A WATER-COLOR DRAWING BY FERD. LAUPBERGER.

painter as well as of a good story-teller. On the contrary, I call this very poor painting, while giving all assent to the claim made for it as a clear and vigorous piece of dramatic work. But, since the great Dutch painters, the Terburgs and the Jan Steens, showed the way to unite clear and dramatic story-telling with the most beautiful painting in the world, I cannot see why we should be called on to accept the story-telling without the painting.

The picture by Harry Jochmus, a little eighteenth century boy making his first essay in drawing under the eye of his master, is remarkable as a study of expression; the thoughts both of the boy and his master are as clearly to be read in their faces as if they were written in a book. As a study of expression and character, this picture carries us a stage higher than either Defregger or Mosler; but the execution is hard and unsympathetic, though painstaking. There is no pleasure here, any more than in the other pictures, in looking at things for their own sake. But, if the visitor had turned from these to "Churning," by Salmson, he would, I think, have admitted that there was good painting—so far, that is, as there can be good painting without color, and that it was a positive pleasure to look at certain parts of the picture for their own sake—the window, with its not very clean muslin curtains, through which the dull light passed so softly; the potatoes that lay so lightly heaped and yet with a full sense of their weight in the bin; and the basket of apples on the huche or bakut, the French peasant keeps his bread; the sense of air in the

room, so that we saw all around the figure of the woman churning, with the responsive action of her jaw and hand;—all these points taken together make a whole which constitute a picture in the true sense of the term, though there may still be allowed wanting a certain indefinable inner sentiment such as Millet would have given, as he so often gave it, to his peasants engaged in similar acts of domestic drudgery.

Mr. Gaugengigl's work, of which there were two good examples, excited much interest, both among artists and laymen. This artist's work has suffered by the want of tact of those who brought it to the notice of our public. It was to have been hoped that the day was past when people would fly into a passion with the newspapers, and accuse the critics of mendacity and conspiracy, because the question was civilly raised as to whether the goods so intemperately bragged would wash. Had Mr. Gaugengigl's pictures been simply put on exhibition as they are here, for example, or, even without the advantage that is given them by its being known that they belong to so careful a buyer and so distinguished an amateur as George I. Seney, they could not have failed to attract attention, because they have many distinguished qualities, and the man who painted them is plainly in earnest. But too much by far was claimed for Mr. Gaugengigl, and a prejudice was not unnaturally excited against his claims by their very extravagance, an extravagance for which I, for one, am persuaded the artist was not to blame. But another, and a better, reason for the cold reception given to these pictures lay in the pictures themselves. We have seen too many masterpieces in this style, too many Meissoniers, Fichels, Chavets, to be astonished at the work of a pupil, however clever. A picture by Fichel, and, though a good one, not one of his best, hung in this exhibition directly over one of Mr. Gaugengigl's, and it did not need much study to see that though Fichel's art knows very well how to conceal the art, yet the art is there, and that it is plain Mr. Gaugengigl has much to do, and far to go, before he can attain to the ease and sureness of the Frenchman. Just the man at the right, in Fichel's picture, breaking eggs into a bowl to make an omelette, was worth all Mr. Gaugengigl's satin skirts put together. Fichel's work is built from the bottom up. Mr. Gaugengigl's work is, as yet, wholly on the surface. It is skilful, it is painstaking, it is inoffensive in taste, and its subjects have the advantage, as companions for a fashionable drawing-room, that they never excite the shadow of an emotion, nor give rise to any thought whatever. Waved before the face of beauty on a fan, or, were we a generation of snuff-takers, given to the nose of popin-jays in their amber snuff-boxes and ta'en away again, they would fulfil all their intellectual destiny. But, such skill as Mr. Gaugengigl is possessed of is not likely to run to waste forever on subjects so uninteresting as these. He has a delicate touch, a sure hand, and a refined mind; why cannot gifts like these be applied to subjects capable of interesting the world of living men and women? Even a Fichel and Meissonier waste their time on these men of the eighteenth century; but, then, Fichel and Meissonier are Frenchmen, and these are their ancestors. Mr. Gaugengigl is, or is called, an American, and, as such, he neither knows anything genuine about these Frenchmen he is so fond of painting, nor can feel any real sympathy with them or their ways. Yet no great painter ever became great without both knowledge and sympathy.

Another American, D. R. Knight, was seen here in an excellent picture, "Hay-makers at Rest," which only needed color to be altogether satisfactory. I have often wondered why we do not hear more of this artist; but I suppose it is because, like many another American, he is virtually expatriated, and finds his subjects where he lives, and his picture-buyers where he makes his pictures. Yet his art is so straightforward, and his themes so of his own time and place, that it is a pity he could not have found his subjects on his native soil. Hard lot, that makes life pleasant and easy away from one's own country! A hard lot and an exceptional one, because every other country under heaven but our own loves and employs its own artists, and yet no one can justly reproach any American who determines to live and paint abroad.

Mr. Ulrich tries his hand at painting what he sees, and with such success that I am sure if he could spend one summer in Holland, and live on nothing but Ter-